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ORAL TRADITIONS OF DORMAA

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DORMAA ORAL TRADITIONS

Introduction:

Was Dormaa part of the Gyaman Kingdom?
This is the question which readily crops up to any research into Dormaa history.

According to some writers the Dormaa Stool is the "nephew" of Gyaman stool.[1] But the authoritative material I have gathered (on Dormaa side) seems to negate this idea. Thus this controversial question needs looking into clarify the situation.

The Dormaa Traditional Area occupies a unique position in the Brong Ahafo Region. It thus have great influence[2] in all aspect of its life. Dormaa shares common borders, in the west, with the Republic of the Ivory Coast and has long been associated with the Gyaman Empire. It has been one of the few nations reputed to have fought Asante not less than ten wars. But later came to ally with Asante to fight Gyaman during the Abo Kofi War. The Dormaa Traditional Area covers a large tract of land, about one third of the Bono land proper and one-quarter of the whole Brong Ahafo region.

The land is rich in timber food crop production, cocoa and coffee cultivation. It is the most populous area in the region and has over 600 towns and villages[3] with a population estimated at 76,050[4] In the past the Dormaa Empire stretched as far as to

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1. Ghana Notes and Queries No. 9, 1966 pp 36-39
2. Dormaa seems to have pr duced all the indigenous Bono Regional Commissioners since independence with the exception of one.
3. This is according to the 1970 Census
4. 1970 Ghana Population Census.

River Adwoa Afua in Sefwi; and shared borders with Denkyira, Tafo, Amakom and Techiman Bono Manso at Trome village.

Having migrated from Akwamu, as a result of stool succession dispute, the Dormaa people settled at various places before their present settlement at Dormaa Ahenkro. Some of these settlements were Akwamu Anwameneso (15 miles to Accra), Nsawam, Nteso (now Obo in Kwahu), Asuongya (now Essumeja in Asante), Adeebehi (now Kumawu in Asante), and Suntreso. As a result of conflicts with the Asantes the Dormaas moved further to Dormaa Hwidiem or Abanpredease (now Bomaa), thence to Abesim and afterwards sojourned in Gyaman Kingdom.

It was from Gyaman that they moved to settle at Dormaa Ahenkro - the present traditional capital.

Dormaa Ahenkro is just a little over 50 miles from Sunyani, the regional capital. It is also 6 miles from the Ivory Coast border at Gonokrom. The interior trunk road from Ghana to the Ivory Coast passes through Dormaa Ahenkro. The current Paramount chief, Nana Agyeman Badu I, is the President of the Regional House of chiefs. He was one of the few chiefs who fought relentlessly to bring about the creation of the region in 1958.

To my knowledge, no substantial work has been done as to Dormaa's rich past, and, I feel it is high time something was done to unearth this to throw more light on Ghana's history.

E.S.K. Owusu

17/9/75

ORAL TRADITIONS OF THE KULAMO ("KULANGO") AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS - GHANA AND IVORY COAST

DORMAA TRADITIONAL AREA (First Interview)

(i) Respondent:

Name: Adomankomahene Ohene David Wiano.

Status: Adomankomahene of Dormaa Traditional Area

Age: 64 years (Born 1911)

Date: 24 - 26th May, 1975.

(ii) In attendance was Nana Agyeman Badu I - Paramount chief of Dormaa Traditional Area.

Q. Where did you come from to settle in this area

A. Akwamu Anwameneso.

Q. Why did you leave your former place

A. It was the result of a succession dispute.

Q. Could you elaborate more on this

A. The dispute was between two twins called Attakora Amaniampong. The junior was favoured to rule but the stool was not given to him. So he left with his supporters to avoid civil strife in the state. He left with four-seventh of the population including the Queen.

Q. In whose reign did this occur.

A. After the reign of Ahensa Sasraku the third king of Akwamu. It was his sister Asi (Esi) Doma who gave birth to the twins.

Q. Who were the predecessors of Ahensa Sasraku

A. The first was Ohene Kusi Amoa. He was followed by Kwafo Akoto.

Q. Could you tell us your movements when you left Anwameneso

A. From Anwameneso we crossed the Volta and came to settle at Kentenkrenase about 15 miles to Accra. Our next place of settlement was in the Kwahu region at a place called Ntɛso. Ntɛso is the present Obomeng as the Kwahus call it.

Q. Why did you leave Ntɛso

A. We left as a result of overpopulation. The brother of the king, Gyebiri Kuma was asked to bring the rest of the people afterwards but he stayed there permanently. So you see the Obomeng people are our relations.

Q. What was your next settlement

A. That was at Asuongya. This has been changed to Essumenja which is in Asante now. It was at this place that the Dormaahene met Mansinhene (Wamfiehene). They became one 'abusua' (family) and the Mansinhene was given the post of Krontihene. The old Krontihene from Akwamu, Tanworaka-Kokrometi-a-ɔdi-Manfa, was given the post of Adontenhene. Thus a union of the two states, Dormaa and Mansin, came into being.

Q. What brought about this union

A. The Mansin people had the same trouble as the Dormaas over Stool succession. As a result their faction left.

So when we met we were more or less brothers with same tale to tell. Our union was easy to form as we had the same thing in common at stake - stool dispute.

Q. Where did you settle again

A. Our fourth place was Adɛɛbɛhi,[1] the present Kumawu in Asante. As in the case of NTOSO Gyebiri Panyin was left at Asuongya to bring the rest of the population afterwards but he did not come.

Q. Why did you move again

A. Because of overpopulation.

Q. Where did you go to settle

A. Suntreso. We stayed here for quite a long time. But before we left for Suntreso Dormaahene's brother Tweneboah Kodua was left at Kumawu to take charge of the rest of the population and to bring them afterwards. But he stayed there forever.

Q. Did you find any people living here when you arrived in this place

A. Yes. The prominent chiefs Dormaahene met here and greeted them were (i) Denkyirahene, Boa Amponsem, (ii) Abakomhene (Amakomhene), Akosa Brempong and (iii) Tafohene, Kwaku Dompoh.

1: The change of name from Adeebihi to Kumawu was the death of the 'Kum' tree which Okomfo Anokye planted.

Q. Did you hear of any other people apart from these

A. The next chief Dormaahene heard of and sent emissaries to greet was Techimanhene, Akumfi Ameyaw, who shared the Western borders with Dormaahene at Trome. On the left of Suntreso was Sefwihene, Kwame Korang with whom Dormaa shared borders up to River Adwoa Afua.

Q. Where did you settle again

A. We settled at Bansu on the Nsuta road where the "Abamoo" rites involving twins were performed. The soil here was unsuitable for settlement and we therefore moved to Etinte near the present town Tepa in Asante. Overpopulation made us move to settle in the grassland just within the neighbourhood of Etinte. This settlement we named Dormaa Abanpredease.

Q. What was significant with the settlement here

A. It was here that we fought the Asante. The then Asantehene was Kobia Amamfi. He fought three times with Dormaa and he was defeated in all. Dormaa fought Oti Akenten three times and he was beaten. Though these chiefs were defeated the Dormaahene did not lay hands on them to cut off their heads.

<u>The Obiri Yeboah Incident</u>: Now I come to Obiri Yeboah who is known in Asante history as Ahenkan. Though he was not the first Asante king yet he is accorded this name because it was in his reign that the Asante became independent of Denkyira tutelage. In fact he is ranked fifth of the Asante kings.

Q. Why did you leave Abanpredease (Bomaa) for your present abode

A You see, the Dormaahene fought Obiri Yeboah twice and it was in the second war at Ofinano that Obiri Yeboah was captured and killed. It was Dormaahene's son Oheneba Dei Kusi Agyeman who fought Obiri Yeboah and cut off his head. In the past Ofinano was known as "Mmodweso" ie. a place where human jaws were removed. Where Obiri Yeboah's body was buried was Bantama otherwise known as "Sibrekete si Bantama Kuro tia". His 'Kete' drum was taken along with his body to this place - Ammosoa. It is a taboo to say what took place at Bantama.

Q. Where were the Asantes when the Dormaas settled at Suntresu

A. Asante was then a vassal state under Denkyirahene. The independent states at that time were Denkyira, Tafo and Abakom. These three states were friendly to Dormaa and did not engage in any war or conflict.

Q. What were the causes of wars in the past

A. The causes were rather political and secondly commercial purposes. For instance the war between Dormaa and Asante was on trade. The Asante had gangs of highway men who terrorised the lives of Dormaa traders to the Coast. They beat them and carried away their goods. This was done under the leadership and guidance of one Yaw Nwonwaa whose village was Apebosso. In the war with Asante Yaw Nwonwaa was killed

and his head cut off. This is said in Dormaa 'apaes' (prayer recitals) that "Wo na woaye saa akum Apebooso Yaw Nwonwaa" literally means "You have done the deed of executing Apebooso Yaw Nwonwaa".

Q. Do you know anything about Nton

A. Yes. We have the following Aduana Nton:-

(i) Aduana Twea ne Abrade Nyampatakyie (Piesie)[1]
(ii) Oyoko (iii) Bretuo (iv) Sakyire (v) Esona (vi) Dakwa (vii) Aduana Agona (viii) Ekoona[2]

The nineth is Aduana Abohyen which was taken from Okomfo Anokye.

The Case of Nkwantahene: In the past the Nkwantahene was part of Dormaa State. Dormaahene's hunter, Bofo Bene Kofi met Nkwantahene at Abewoye on the left side of Kukuom. The Nkwantahene then was Ntonkuroko. He came to greet Dormaahene. His Queen was Nyaa Tabane. Dormaahene invited Ntonkuroko to come and stay with him at Abanpredease. It was a very big settlement with over 178 streets. To summon sub-chiefs for a meeting seven guns had to be fired at vantage points. Nkwantahene refused to stay at such a big noisy place and instead requested to settle at a small quiet place. He was settled at a junction (Nkwanta) with four roads leading to Denkyira, Techiman, Tafo and Abakom, and to Dormaa Abanpredease respectively.

1: This embraces the whole Dormaa State

2: This is similar to Bretuo

The settlement took place finally during the reign of Adu Yaw. This Adu Yaw was impatient and hastily commented on any issue that cropped up at Court. Any case which had to be commented upon first by Krontire and Akwamu would be done by Adu Yaw. As a result he was nicknamed "Adu Peree" and it was also said at that time that "Wo pere asem ho se Nkwantahene Adu Yaw". This became one of his titles "Adu Peree" but at the same time was a derogatory remark.

The Case of Berekumhene:- The Berekumhene Amokona Diawuo was the son of Dormaa Stool. Amokona was otherwise known as Asokorehene or Awasuhene. His father was Dormaahene Nana Kyereme Sikafoo. Nana Kyereme married the Queen of Berekum who gave birth to Amokona Diawuo. Thus in the past both Berekum and Nkwanta formed part of Dormaa State but at present it is not so.

Q. Why did you migrate to Gyaman and then to the present place - Dormaa Ahenkro.

A. It was as a result of war between us and the Asante under Osei Tutu. The Dormaahene who fought this war was Yeboah Kodie - Mpobiyaa ba a ogu akom. He fought the Asante eight times in all.

Q. What was the result of the Osei Tutu - Yeboah Kodie war

A. The Abesewahene and the Hwimhene of Dormaa State were taken war prisoners. You see, we were short of gunpowder for this war. So the Mansinhene, Hwimhene called Akyerεko (a royalist) and Abesewahene called Yiridu Anantuo were sent to buy some.

They were instructed to stop the Asante advance into Dormaa territory. They could not do this and were taken prisoners except Mansinhene. That is why Abesewa and Hwim now serve Asantehene.

Q. Lid you find any other people living here when you arrived in this place

A. We met the Nkoran (Kulamo) and the Mpantra (Mfantra or Nafana). The Nkoranhene was Nworobea and the Mpantrahene was Gyedu Baa.

Q. What happened between your people and the people you met on arrival.

A. Their administration and rule was not up to expectation "frotefrote" yet they had a big kingdom which was well populated. The Dormaas therefore waged war and defeated them. The heads of the two kings were cut off and the skulls are with us here.

Q. Who was the Dormaa king at that time

A. Afari Kokoo. ("The Red" Afari). After his reign came Kyereme Sikafoo.

Q. Where were your people during the campaigns against the indigenous people

A. We were in Asuofiri area in the Republic of Ivory Coast. Where Nana Afari Kokoo died and was buried was Breman otherwise known as Asubfiri. The Asuofiri people are the "Abamfoo" who are still guarding the body of the chief.

Q. Why did you leave Asuofiri area

A. After Nana Afari's death the new chief Kyereme Sikafoo wanted us to go away. He therefore went ahead of us. He told us that all could not leave at once, and after harvesting the crops those left behind were to bring the corpse of the dead chief to Abanpredease.

Q. Could you give us the list of your chiefs

A. (1) Attakora Amaniampong
(2) Yeboah Kodie
(3) Afari Kokoo (Afari 'The Red')
(4) Kyeremeh Sikafoo
(5) Twumasi Abene
(6) Oppong Panyin
(7) Oppong Kuma
(8) Antwi Kogyeabour (He fought Adinkra War).
(9) Yeboah Asuamah
(10) Kwame Mprah
(11) Kofi Asubonteng
(12) Kofi Ansu (Koawia)
(13) Kwadwo Yeboah
(14) Oppong Yaw (Founder of Dormaa Ahenkro).
(15) Afari Ababio
(16) Agyeman Badu I (present chief & enstooled 1950).

NB. Dormaa tradition forbids the inclusion of destooled chiefs in the chronology. According to my investigations three chiefs have so far been destooled. They are (1) Oppong Yaw Kuma (He came after Oppong Yaw Panyin - Founder of Dormaa Ahenkro) After his destoolment came Afari Ababio. (2) Kofi Asubonteng (3) Oppong Yaw Ababio III (also known as Paul). After him came Nana Agyeman Badu I - the present Omanhene.

Gyaman (Dormaa) Empire:- Having conquered the Mpantra and the Nkoran peoples the Dormaa/Gyaman made a permanent settlement. To the far north they shared borders with Kong, to the West was River Komoe, to the South with Denkyira, and to the East with Techiman at Trome (near Wenchi).

Government and Institutions

Q. How is your state governed

A. Those who help in the government and in the administration of justice are the Asafohene. Some of them are the following:- Krontihene, Adontenhene, Aduanahene (head of Oyoko family), Benkumhene, Kyeremohene, Akwamuhene, Kyidomhene, Nifahene (from Bomaa), Twafohene and Gyasehene. Justice was administered fairly, in the past, in order that no subject was executed without cause. The offences that merited death were:- (1) Going after the King's wife (2) Insulting any of the King's children or any of the royalists or fighting any of them. Such an act reflected on the personality of the king and as such had to be treated with all severity. (3) Insulting or striking any of the Asafohene on a stool. Apart from these other offences were punishable by fines.

Q. Could you also give us the list of your queens

A. (1) The first was Kum Daa. She was the "Mother" of all the kings. She brought us from Akwamu.

(2) Mpobi Yaa

(3) Gyaabea Yaa

(4) Ankomaa Takyi

(5) Takyiwa Amoa

Q. What role does a queen play in the society

A. The Queen plays a notable role in the enstoolment of the chief. She has to select a suitable candidate for a vacant stool. If her choice is rejected twice she has to ask the whole Oman (State) to find a suitable one. The Asafohene and the Queen in concert find a suitable candidate for a vacant stool.

Q. How are candidates selected to become chiefs

A. In the past preference was given to brothers before nephews - sisters' sons. But at present the only important qualification is formal education to a high level.

Q. Do you have any stool property

A. Yes. These include items like umbrellas, drums, swords etc. The biggest state umbrella is called 'Bamoo'. The first is known as "Akoko baatan ne ne mma". There is another called 'Nyankonton'. The symbol on top of the Nyankonton is called "Oto akyire a ofa" which indicates that the Dormaahene is omnipresent and sees whatever goes on at all places. Thus if anything falls ahead of him or behind him he could collect it. The meaning of Nyankonton (rainbow) is that it is so conspicuous and seen from every dimension

by all. Thus the chief of Dormaa is similar to Nyankonton, so majestic and fearful that everyone hears of him. There is another umbrella called "Nyina ne Mmɛne". This literally means the silk cotton tree and horns. This signifies that to what-ever level of one's attainment in life is never feared by the chief. You could grow to the height of the silk cotton tree or grow the horns of a buffalo yet before the chief you are tamed. The last one has the symbol of 'Prɛkɛsɛ - Gyanaadu'. This is a seed with a very strong smell indicating that when the chief is out in public all and sundry, far and near, present or absent feel his presence.

Staffs of Office:- These are known as the Akyeame Poma and are gold-plaited. One is called 'Adwetakyi anoma weremfoo' - he stands on a cannon with a bottle of gunpowder in the mouth with rounds of ammunition at the waist. This signifies the protector of the realm. There is the second one with a symbol of a buffalo which signifies that however thin this animal grows, when killed will be able to fill "apakro" ie. one platform on which meat is smoked. This in essence means the chief could not be underestimated under any circumstances. He is always what he is - he was, he is and he will be. There is another one which shows two people sitting on a stool. One is seen eating while the other sits with the hand by the chin watching. This is interpreted to

mean that "Dee adee wo no na odie ie. the one who provides house-keeping money or the owner of a thing is entitled to its consumption. The biggest of the staffs has an elephant symbol. It stands on "dadefidie (a trap) buried in the ground. Because of its weight the trap has been rendered useless. This proverbially means when the elephant steps in a trap (of whatever nature) it fails to work. The elephant rather destroys it instead.

Q. In whose reign did all these come about

A. Nana Attakora Amaniampong.

Q. What are the oaths of your state

A. The greatest oath is 'Lormaa-Man'. This came as a result of the inevitable civil strife at Akwamu which was averted by the migration of Atta Kumaa to our present abode. In the past if one swore it without any good cause he was executed summarily. On the other hand if it was sworn in good faith one provided 'aseda' (thanksgiving) one predwan, which was about £9 6/- (£19.20).

Q. Where did the executions take place

/a A. Wansamboobo. This was a very big stone under/mighty tree.

Q. What are the main festivals of your state

A. There are two types (a) Odwira and (b) Ordinary. The Odwira is celebrated by all Amanhene who had gone to war and got some heads of other prominent chiefs.

Dormaahene, for instance, has got four of such heads - Obiri Yeboah, Gyedu-Baa, Nworobea, and Abo Kofi. The lesser chiefs are permitted by their Paramount chiefs to celebrate ordinary festivals to rally round their people.

Q. In whose reign did you start to celebrate festivals

A. The Odwira Festival was first done by Ohene Kusi Amoah and has continued since. So it started when we had not left Akwamu.

DORMAA ORAL TRADITIONS (CONTINUED)

Break

Resumption: 25/5/75 (Sunday afternoon).

Traditional Economy

Q. Have you always been farmers

A. Yes.

Q. What crops do you cultivate

A. Yam, plantain, and "atwubu".

Q. What is atwubu

A. It is like 'asukooko' and it is always cultivated near rivers. It is not good for fufu and therefore eaten as ampesi.

(In the past we did not know cocoyam.)
( )
(I shall soon tell you how we came by it)

Q. What other crops do you cultivate besides those mentioned above

A. Maize. This is used in various ways. It can be roasted or dried and pounded to obtain the powder which can be made into Koko, porridge, and "too"

Q. What is 'too'

A. Abetɛɛ or Konkonte. The maize can also be made into "Mpɛsaa fufuo". In the past it was this food we carried along to wars. It lasted for quite a long time without going bad.

Q. Could you supply us the list of other food items you carried to war

A. The light foods we could carry along were (i) all types of corn meal (ii) Konkonte (iii) groundnuts. We carried these

foods in our "abosoam" - containers. Yam and plantain were just heavy to carry along. In all our wars our eyes were always set to conquer the enemy as soon as possible to lay hands on their food supply.

Q. Have you heard about salt

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you get salt from

A. We could neither get it from Bono nor Asante. We got it from Dwaa, Simpa, Nkran, and Kwankyeabo.[1] We also got some from Bondouku.

Q. In the absence of salt what did you use

A. There was virtually no salt during the rainy seasons because all the rivers overflowed their banks. Two months before the rains we set for the coast to buy salt. Some went to Bondouku and others to Kwankyeabo. When we brought the salt we had to preserve it from melting. We prepared a container from palm leaves called "bedes" and put in all the salt. We placed the container just above the hearth to enable the gradual heat and smoke to warm and make it dry.

Q. How long did you travel to obtain the salt

A. If one went to Dwaa (Ohene Kwadwo Mbrakrom) he spent 40 days, to Nkran (Adwetakyi Apaasoo) one spent 40 days also.

1: Local names used: Dwaa refers to Cape Coast
Simpa refers to Winneba
Nkran refers to Accra

It was no joke making this journey.

Q. You have also heard of kola nuts

A. Yes. It grew wild in the forest - dispersal of seeds by animals. It was not part of our food. If any one was seen eating it indicated he was not happy and that he had experienced something unpleasant.

How Abesim became Abesim

Having conquered the Mfantra and the Nkoran peoples the Dormaahene asked one of the royalists by name Bofo Bene to take charge of them. The Dormaahene left for another place. He asked Bofo Bene to bring the rest of his subjects, including his vassal states (Nkoran & Mfantra). Where he came to wait for them was Abesim. He told Bene that he was chewing kola (bese) up to the time that all the people (dɔm) would be brought to him. He further instructed that those at Asuefiri were to be brought too. If all were brought the three groups would journey to congregate at Abanpredease. Thus Nana said, "Womma yɛ a mentoo bese nguu yɛ" hence Abesim - ie. a place where kola nut was put in the mouth. Nana was expecting the dead king's body interned at Breman (Asuefiri) to be brought.

Q. Where did you sell some of the kola nut

A. Kintampo where the Mossi people came to buy it. There was a very big market there.

Traditional Economy

Q. Did you have animals

A. Yes.

Q. Could you name some of them

A. Domestic:- cow, sheep, duck, turkey, fowl, dove, cat (a royalist beast which brings blessing: "ɛyɛ hɛɛda"), then the dog which is the symbol of Dormaa Traditional State. It is not reared in the kingdom.

Game:- The elephant (royalist creature), buffalo, tromoo, koo, forotee, sonsono, bee (ɛbee), kokote, kotoko, wansane.

Q. You mentioned "mankani" (cocoyam) earlier on, tell us the story about it and that of cassava too

A. It was during my generation, when Yaa Asantewaa fought the white man, that cocoyam came about. It came from Asafo.

Q. Where is Asafo

A. On the high way to Dwaa (Cape Coast). That was why at first cocoyam was called "asafo mma". It was brought to Dormaa by the traders and migrants who went to the coast.

Cassava:- It has been in existence long long ago but we did not know how to eat it. We called it "Setaat" ie. starch. The other name we gave to it was "Kotrobankye". We feared this crop as death was associated with it - "Kotrobankye na worebedie afei na worebɛ wuo"

Q. How came the change that you now eat it

A. It was when the white man came that people could travel to all places freely that we learned to eat it. Another point is that women were giving birth to many children, "awoo ntoatoaso". Thus the population was increasing without increase in local

food production. We came to realize that if it was mixed with cocoyam or plantain it tasted good. We learned it from the Fante and the Akwapem peoples.

Q. How were you maintaining your chiefs

A. The chiefs are our masters. We give them due respect. After every twelve months the king tells us to get prepared for the purification of the stool and to give it food to eat. For the success of this ceremony all the subjects give substantial contributions. For instance, a young man could contribute about four 'predwan' ie/ about ₵50.00. Some even contributed twelve predwan[1] in the past for the glory of the stool. It is on such occasions that the king will realize whether his people like him or not and therefore adjust his way of rule; for the more they contribute indicate the love they have for him.

Q. Have you been trading before the white men came

A. Yes. In the past we traded with friendly nations. Some of the commodities were foodstuff and gunpowder. We went as far as to Lwaa and Nkran to buy wares to come and sell.

Q. Are there any minerals in this area

A. Yes. We mined gold nugget and gold dust. Without this we could not have survived. It was with the gold we obtained that we could buy guns and gunpowder to fight our wars.

Q. How did you obtain the gold

A. We dug the river beds to get it. The process was very

1: One predwan is £9 6/-

difficult and tiring. Sometimes it was sheer luck. For some lucky folks could get gold nuggets as big as my fist. The rulers allowed their subjects to mine gold and did not confiscate it. The subjects, in turn, would give part of their treasure to the rulers as thanksgiving. This was done in view that it was their prayers and guidance which made them come by their fortune.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Q. Were your ancestors Christians, Mohammedans or ancestral worshippers

A. We were God-fearing that was why the king did not execute people for nothing. The way we served God was by erecting Nyamedua. This was made from "senuro dwankorabata" - a forked senuro plant. It was erected in every household and was besmeared with white clay and also tied with calico. A pot was placed at the top. At meals a morsel was put in the pot and you say, "God, You created me and gave me food. I am at meals and this is yours." This was the way we served our God.

Q. What was the origin of your ancestor worship

A. We did this by preserving the dignity of the stool. Any disrespect given to the stool reflected on the dead ancestors. That is why we do whatever we can to see to it that the stool is not disgraced or disrespected. We went to war in the past to protect the good name of the stool.

Q. What are your marriage rites and customs

A. We have "nsi yere" ie. betrothed marriage. One can tell a young man that "I like you and if my wife gives birth to a baby girl she will be your future wife". If such a wish comes true one has to look after the girl until she grows to maturity. The would-be husband will then be informed to perform the initiation rites. You then go in search of meat, salt, and cloth to perform the "bra to" rites. If this is not done you do not share the same bed with her.

Marriage Involving the chiefly class:- The king has the power and right to marry up to 300 (three hundred) women. Some of these women are selected from some households. He does not take the women by force from these traditional "wife-households". He performs an elaborate marriage ceremony which surpasses that of the ordinary person in the street "Akoa mpo sa oye ama yeapene no na ete sa ohene" ie. The slave says he wants praisewhat about the king. The king does ten times that of the ordinary man to deserve his status. If such a woman (from a selected household) happens to die a replacement has to made immediately by the "abusua panyin" - head of the lineage. Moreover, all twin sisters (not of Oyoko family) are brought to the king to marry. No young man is allowed to marry any of them. If the twins were "Takyi ne Amane" ie. male and female, the female would be taken as a wife and the male becomes the "Okra Dware ni" (the cleanser of the king's soul).

Q. Have you got Fetish Priests or Akomfo

A. (My informant declined saying anything on this topic., The reason assigned was yesterday's episode when the tape used got broken. This mishap has been attributed to the ancestral gods).

Q. Have there been any litigations over land boundaries between your state and any of the neighbouring states

A. There has been one between us and the Sefwi people. The Dormaa people put the boundary at River Adjua Afua while the Sefwis advanced it to Nkasum. This dispute has been resolved to the satisfaction of the two parties concerned by the Government of the N. R. C. The settlement took place last two years ie. 1973.

Third Interview with Nana Adomankomahene

Q. What are the death rites and customs of a chief

A. In the past the death of a king was a great tragedy. After a public announcement all the chiefs assembled to swear the oath of allegiance to the dead king. This was the full text of what every chief said at the swearing ceremony.

"Gye sɛ Tweaduampon

Ɔsɔ adeɛ mu bi nngye
Ɔno de yɛ bɛayɛ
Ɔno aa de yɛ bɛkɔ

(The swearer here holds the hand of Okyeame)

Sɛ ka yɛ topɛn krɔ ne kura yɛ
Ɔman kɛseɛ yi anko anngye yɛ

Anka bɛnya wo a -
Anka yɛsrɛ yɛka"

NB: At this juncture the swearer put down his "Nhemma Nna" by the king's body.

Meaning of the Bono Version

What the chiefs said in essence, was that the death could not have come about without the hand of Tweaduampon - God, the Creator. If it were not the making of the Great God, the Giver and Taker, who else could have done this deed to make the king lie so low. Could the perpetrator have succeeded with the king's numerous and uncountless armies standing by.

May God forbid!!

I renew my oath of allegiance that this could never have come about for you to die in the hands of the enemy.

Q. What was this Nhemma Nna

A. An "akyerɛ" - a malefactor. Such a category of people were killed to accompany the dead king to carry his load, in the next world. All the "apakanfo"[1] wing chiefs buried the king with "Nhema Nna".

Q. What happened after the Nhema Nna ritual

A. A special day was appointed for the official funeral celebration.

1: They are the chiefs who are entitled to hold the sword "Bosom Sawiri" to swear allegiance.

Many rulers of the status of Dormaahene - "Nsa Woso" - were invited to mourn with us. It was on that day that we received donations. The 'apakanfo' in presenting their donations added an "akyere". It was on such a day, too, that the last swearing in ceremony took place. Thus ended the funeral.

Q. Were there women "akyere".

A. The only woman victim was the "akra-afenaa" (the king's soul woman). She was among the first sacrifices. Her role was to go and boil water for the king's bath.

Q. What happens if one of the sub-chiefs were to die

A. If any were to die the king had to be informed immediately. He has to despatch an emissary with some court criers to go and mourn with the bereaved clan. The king has to swear before his dead wing chief that if his death were not caused by God and were that of an enemy he would have protected him from such a calamity and that the enemy would have been hacked to pieces. This was done by the king to let the deceased chief's subjects have confidence in him. They would come to realize that whenever they were in trouble he, the Osagyefo (the Field Marshall) would come to save and would never desert them. On the day of the official celebration the same court officials would be despatched to represent the king. In the case of the death of the "Mpakan Kese" chiefs the king went himself.

/of the NB: Many aspects/customs are still prevailing without human sacrifices.

ʊ. Have you any drum music, songs, incantations, Kwadwom etc. in which the history of your state is narrated

A. Kings or prominent rulers like the Dormaahene have the "atumpan sono" some of these are Asantehene, Nkoranzahene, Techimanhene, Denkyirahene, Tafohene, Abakomhene, etc. The other lesser chiefs use any ordinary animal skin.

Drum Language In Praise of the king:-

(1) Agyeman Badu ee!! (current ruler)
Otua tokuro
Abono Kyempem Duoduakwahene.

(2) Obua Tweneboa Kodua Brempon see
Oma wo damirifua
Woyɛ katakyi mo aforoo a orebɛko

(3) Obanim twerɛboo a wo ho bone atuduro
Wo ko ko a na koro·bata
Na nsensane agye kuro yi
(The king rises at this juncture)

Translation

(1) Agyeman Badu ee!! (The current ruler is called)
He seals all openings
King of Abono Kyempem Duoduakwa

(2) Tweneboa Kodua condoles you
You are great warrior who puts on 'aforoo'
Ready to fight

(3) The great one who smells gunpowder like the flint
where have you been to
That the bahama grass has outgrown the

The weeds in the town

/this (The king rises at/ juncture)

Q. Why does the king rise up

A. Because the last words are a challenge to his dignity - "Wo kɔɔ hene na nsensane agya kuro yi." - Where have you been to that the nsensane (bahama grass) has out-grown in the streets. The bahama grass indicates the enemy who has infiltrated to the town. Would the king sit down unconcerned that the enemy would come to conquer us and make us slaves. Thus the king rises up to go and face the enemy to quell him down.

Praise Song continues)

(4) Ana gu akuro
Ma wo homene so
Ɔbiretua Kuampon
Ɔtua akwan tu nnɛɛ
Mawo homene so ɛ,
Barima ee!!

(5) Ɔkwan tware asuo
Asuo tware akwan
Ɔkwan panyin de hwane
Ye twaa kwan kɔ tɔɔ asuo
Na asuo so firi hene
Asuo so firi te te
Ɔdomankoma bɔɔ adeɛ
Tweneboa Kodua Brempon
Wo damirifua nie di akudonto

(6) Asuo bi kyɛne bosom po
Ɔhene ma wo homene so
Ma wohomene so ɛ
Okum nnipa goro atɔprɛ
Ma wo homeneso ɛ
Wo yɛ katakyi wo yɛ Barima dada
Yɛbɔɔ wo din na yɛntɔɔ so
Yɛbɔɔ wo din na ɔte sa
Ɔkatakyi a ɔkura tuo ne afena bɛko

Translation:-

(4) Destroyer of states rise up
All cross roads come to meet you
Be exalted, the manly warrior

(5) The road crosses the river
The river crosses the road
Which is the older
We made the road to meet the river
Where is the source of the river
The river has been there from time immemorial
The Great Tweneboa Kodua do accept our condolences.

(6) Is any river greater than the sea
Great king be exalted
Be exalted
You kill people for 'atopre' ritual
Be exalted
You are the Great one from time unknown
Your great name has been existence for long
The Great one who holds the sword
Ready for war.

Q. Is the drum language, incantations etc. played on the atumpan alone

A. We have another drum Amunukua, a single drum on which can be played whatever is played on the atumpan.

Warfare:-

Q. Did your state have any standing army

A. The whole state constituted the army. In the past if there were any war Nana would just ask, say, six 'apakanfo' to go to fight.

Q. What was the strength of one 'apakan'

A. If the wing was big it could provide as much as 3,000 guns (ie. soldiers) some had 2,000 and others 1,000 guns

respectively. The apakan were selected on the strength of the enemy you were going to face.

Q. How did you fight and what weapons were used

A. In war the main road (tempone) was occupied by the king being the Sahene - warrior chief. On the right (Nnase Nifa) was occupied by some of the troops and on the left (Nnase Benkum) was also occupied. Both extreme right (Fie Tantia Nifa) and left (Fie Tantia Benkum) were also occupied. At the rear of the king was the Kyidoomhene. The king himself was immediately surrounded by the "Atuntufoo" - his main body guard. This group in turn was completely surrounded by the Gyase group. How could the enemy lay hands on the king with such a formation unless God wished it so. In all our wars we fought to capture the Sahene (King or war leader) and once he was captured or killed the war came to an end.

Q. What weapons did you use

A. Guns, cutlasses, gunpowder and the best weapon we had was bravery.

Q. Where did you get the weapons from

A. We had our own people who made the local guns for us. They also manufactured gunpowder and cutlasses. Where we could not make them we went to Dwaa to buy from the British.

Q. When you had not known the gun what did you use

A. Tweaduampon (God, the Creator) created man and gun at the

same time. No chief was created bare-handed without the gun.

Q. Where did you purchase guns on the coast

A. Dwaa (Cape Coast), Simpa (Winneba), Nkran (Accra), Kwankyeabo. The latter was very famous for its gun-powder.

Q. Where is Kwankyeabo

A. It is just beyond Sefwi area.

Q. Have you any Asafo companies

A. We had this otherwise we won't have chiefs known as Asafohene. Asafo companies were formed to give courage and vitality to the youth to fight wars successfully. The Asafo groups had juju medicine which they used to bath and drink. This made them brave and fearless.

Q. In whose reign did the Asafo companies emerge. Did they have any insignia

A. The Asafo groups had their own flags. They were imprinted black, red, and white. The design looked like that of the chess board. The leaders always held the flags in front of their groups when they appeared in public.

Q. Do you still have these Asafo groups

A. No. But my generation came to meet it.

Q. What were some of the taboos

A. The only one I know of is to show bravery and loyalty to the stool. Rebellion against the stool occupant was highly detested.

Traditional Economy:-

Q. Have you always been farmers

A. Yes. We cultivated the following crops - yam, plantain, maize, groundnut and 'atwubu'.

(i) Plantain:- From this we got konkonte

(ii) Maize: - From this we got mpata fufuo, Kenkey, esam

(iii) Atwubu: - This looks like the cocoyam. It is not good for fufu. It is always grown by /riverside /the

(iv) Cocoyam: - It was in my generation that cocoyam was brought.

Q. From where

A. Asafo so we used to call it "asafo mma."

Q. Where is this place

A. Between Sefwi and Lwaa.

Q. When did cocoyam come

A. 63 years ago ie. 1912.

Q. What other food crops were brought

A. Cassava. This is a local crop but we did not know how to eat it at first. The Fantis and Akwapims knew how to eat. It was one Kwabena Yeboah, a royalist of Kyidom clan, who brought it to Kobedi to teach us how to eat it. The other crop we ate was the ahabayers ie. wild yam.

Q. You have heard of salt

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you get salt from

A. We got salt from Dwaa, Simpa, Nkran, and Srafa or Srapa (Salaga).

Q. Where is Srafa

A. It can be found in Larem ie. the Savanna country.

Q. How long is the distance

A. In the past we spent forty (40) days to make the journey to all these places except Bondouku where we spent fifteen (15) days in and out.

Q. You have also heard of kola nuts

A. Yes.

Q. Do you grow them as you plant cocoa trees or you collect them from the forests

A. We planted some and animals in the bush carried some of the seeds which grew wild in the forest. We did not eat it as the Mossi people did. We ate it when we were in trouble eg. mourning the dead.

Q. Where did you go to sell the kola nuts you did not eat

A. Kintampo and Mossiland. Some of the Mossi people came down here to buy some.

Q. What was the medium of exchange between you and the Mossi.

A. Gold.

Q. Where did you obtain gold from

A. River beds.

Q. We dug and removed the ore and washed it in containers. We had two scales to weigh the gold. We had pieces of stone to the equivalent of £1, £2 or £4. We put the gold on one

side and the stone on the other and if they balanced then we knew the worth of the gold. Predwan has its pieces of stone.

Q. How much is one predwan

A. £9 6/-

Those who had plenty of gold kept it in pots and boxes.

Q. Did you have animals

A. Domestic animals - cow, sheep, fowls, turkey, duck, dove, cat (royalist animal and is not eaten by us) and then the dog - which brought fire to us.

Bush animals - elephant, buffalo (ɛkoo), tromoo, eforotee, sonsono, fusuo, kokote, ɛbeɛ, wansane (antelope group), kotoko and apɛsɛ (porcupine group). The meat of the latter is not brought before the king for it is not royalist meat. If any game was killed one of the two rear thighs was presented at the royal court.

POST EUROPEAN PERIOD

Q. Have you heard of slavery and slave trade.

A. Yes.

Q. How were you conducting these in your state

A. It was sheer necessity that compelled us to own slaves. What the wise man did when he had money was to buy a slave. You might grow old that you would not be able to go to work on your farm and it was the slave who would work for you. Thus your whole life in old age was solely dependent on your slave(s).

The first thing one had to do was to obtain both male and female slaves. The children by their marriage replenished your family. The men slaves farmed for you. Some were trained to be hunters and provided all your food and meat supply. So this was a very wise device.

Q. How were you treating these slaves

A. They were treated kindly as part and parcel of one's own family. If they were not properly and carefully handled they would run away for they could be sent on errands and to the farms alone without you. Thus the avenues of running away were always open to them.

Q. Were you conducting "slave wars" or you bought the slaves from other people

A. There were no slave wars as such. But all captives in wars were treated like slaves.

Q. Could a slave rise to occupy any stool in the state

A. A group of slaves could be incorporated into the lineage when captured. Some could be assigned positions of trust in the family. In the past they were known as "Efie Ades". Within their own slave group could be succession and inheritance if any junior stool was assigned to them. With reference to the big stools this pattern prevailed:- If all the royalist male group was exhausted, leaving only females, such a stool could be assigned to any slave-male to occupy it as caretaker.

Nana put it this way, "Akoko fufuo kyere fie a ne ho bere" ie. literally - the most immaculate fowl having been brought to sojourn in the house for a very long period got the feathers coloured. Thus the slave by his long stay and association with a particular family became part of it.

Q. Does Dormaa have some lands under some other chieftains

A. Subonpanhene, Brosakrohene and Tepahene - the latter now serves Asante.

ILLUSTRATION OF DIAGRAM:-

(1) In time of war, the king went through the "Temponem" - the main road. He was immediately surrounded by the soldier guards called Atuntufoo. This group in turn was surrounded by the Gyase Warriors. Behind this group was the Kyidomhene and his warriors.

(2) In front of the king could be seen this pattern:- The Twafoo occupied the fore front. They were immediately followed by the Adonten and then the Krontire.

(3) The wings were kept safe by this arrangement:-

(i) On the immediate right of the king was Nnase Nifa while on the extreme right was found Fie Tantia Nifa. The same pattern was on the left with Nnase Benkum and Fie Tantia Benkum respectively.

Q. In whose reign did you start using the gun as a war weapon

A. Ohene Kusi Amoah. He was followed by Kwafo Akoto and Ansa

Sasraku respectively.

(iv) Attakora Amaniampong - His faction broke away.

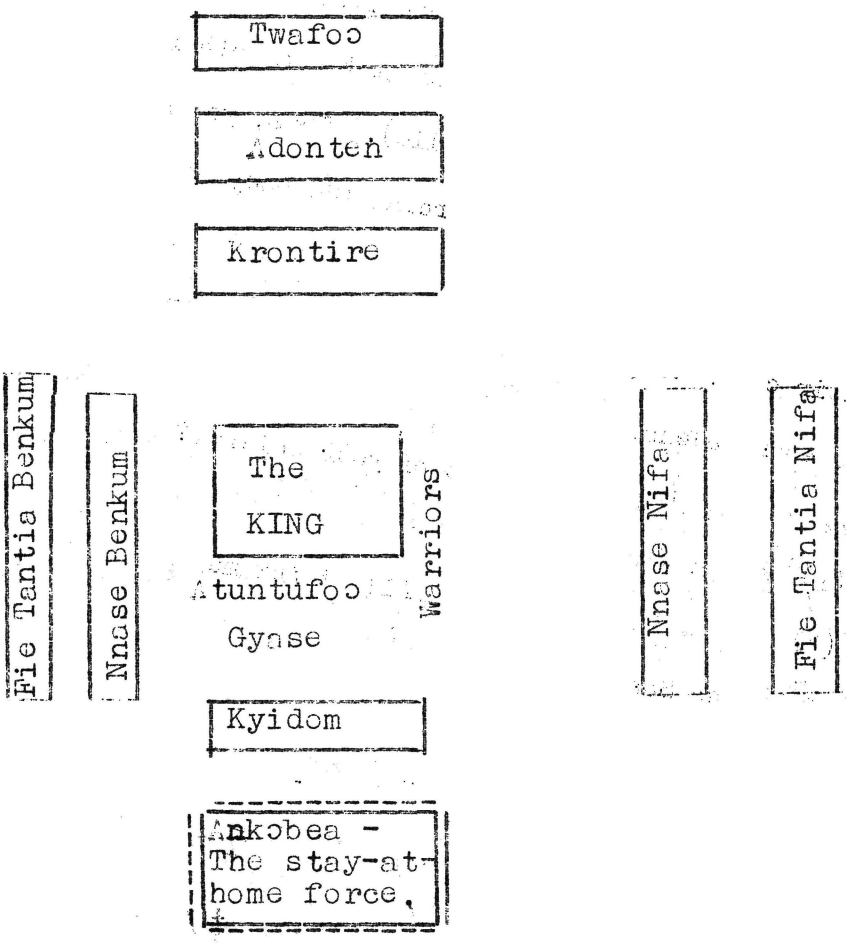
Q. Why is it that the Asafo companies are no more functioning

A. In the past they were organized for war purposes but we do not fight wars now. Moreover, when they are organized now they will not serve any useful purpose besides plotting to destool the chiefs, hence their dissolution.

BREAK

Resumption

Q. War Formation Diagram:-



Dormaa Oral Traditions - Supplementary to First Interview.

Q. Whom did you meet when you arrivedhere?

A. Nkoran and Mpantra.

Q. Who were the leaders of these two groups?

A. The Nkoranhene was called Nworobea and the Mpantrahene was Gyedu Baa.

Q. What was the relationship between you and these people?

A. The way they administered their states was "frote-frote" which we did not like.

Their two kingdoms had great population. The Dormaahene waged war on them and cut off the heads of the two chiefs.

Q. Who was then the king of Dormaa?

A. Afari Kokoo.

He made the campaigns against Nkoran and Mpantra. He died shortly after conquering these people. His successor was Kyeremeh Sikafoo who started agitations to migrate from Gyaman to Abanpredease. Afari Kokoo's body was interred at Breman otherwise known as Asuofiri (now in the Ivory Coast Republic). Thus, you see, the Asuofiri people are all Abanimfoo guarding the body of their dead king. Kyeremeh Sikafoo told them that he was leaving and after harvesting their crops they were to follow, with the corpse of the late ruler, to Abanpredease.

Q. Could you give us the list of your chiefs ?

(1) Ohene Kusi Amoah
(2) Kwafo Akoto
(3) Ansa Sasraku

} All at Akwamu

(4) Attakora Amaniampong - Left Akwamu with his group.

(5) Yeboah Kodie - Mpobi Yaa Ba a Ode Akom. He fought against Asante eight times.

(6) Afari Kokoo - Afari "Red"

(7) Kyeremeh Sikafoo

(8) Twumasi Abene - Twumasi Ankra Suoboom

(9) Oppong Panyin

(10) Oppong Kuma

(11) Ansu Kogyeabour - He fought Adinkra war together with Asantehene.

(12) Yeboah Asuamah

(13) Kwame Mprah

(14) Kofi Asubonteng

(15) Kofi Ansu - Koawie (i.e. the day light warrior)
He fought Ayi Mensah of Bepoase - Nkran Apaaso.

(16) Kwadwo Yeboah

(17) Oppong Yaw (Founder of Dormaa Ahenkro)

(18) Afari Ababio

(19) Nana Agyeman Badu I - Dadeeako Tummire a oto akyire Barima Katakyie a Nafee - fee ako Mmontoo akofa Kokoo abo kokoo so". (Present paramount chief of Dormaa Traditional Area).

Q. How was your state administered?

A. Justice was fair. No subject was executed without cause.
The following offence merited execution without any option of fine.

(i) goint after any of the King's wives

(ii) insulting any of the king's children or any of the adehyee (royalists or fighting any of them). Such acts reflected on the king's personality.

(iii) insulting or striking any of the Asafohene on a stool created by the king.

Besides these all other offences were punishable by fines.

Q. Could you tell me those who assist the king in administering the state?

A. They are the Asafohene. Some are the following:-

(a) Krontihene - Tanworaka Kukrobeti a odi Manfa

(b) Adontenhene - Gyamfi Kumanini (Mirekuhene)

(c) Aduanahene[1] - Weapea Akofo

(d) Benkumhene - Kyeremohene

(e) Akwamuhene - Abamkoro

(f) Nifahene - Fadi aponko

(g) Nifahene (Bomaahene) - Kyeremeh Gyaana (1st chief of Bomaa).

(h) Twafohene (Ankontanimhene) - Bosompra Kwabena

(i) Gyasehene - - Oheneba Apea Yaw.

Second Interview

Q. Could you tell us Dormaa traditional lands and their boundaries?

A. Dormaahene is a great chief and he is likened to the Nyankonton (rainbow). Thus he is everywhere and seen by all and sundry.

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1. Aduanahene is also the head of the Oyoko Family.

The towns and villages and hamlets under Dormaahene are over 600 (six hundred) with a population of about 80,000. The tract of land that belongs to Dormaahene is estimated to be $\frac{1}{3}$ in the Brong Ahafo region.

I must confess the towns and village are so numerous that I do not know even half of them. Those I have set foot are the following:- Wanfie, Wam-Anafo, Pampaso, Kyerɛmasu, Subinkrom, Anyinasu, Edwee, Akwamu, Asuotiano, Abesim, Bomaa, Chiraa, Kwameasua, Tronane, Ekuren, Asikasu, Ldiabaa, Nkrankwanta, Kyakrom, Lduasidan, Etomfoyawkrom, Kofibadukrom, Kyerɛbɛkyerɛbɛkrom, Antwirifokɛsɛɛ, Esrɛmani, Agyenna, Benekwamokrom, Kofiasua, Atɔsikrom, Nsɛsrɛsɛ, Ahogonokasahenekrom, Sopoda, Kobedi or Akyɛremadekobedi (my own village) Asupraa, Etoasuano, Lansokrom etc. etc. All these and others unmentioned are under Dormaahene and nobody else.

Q. What are the rules of succession in your state?

A. If all maternal brothers are not exhausted there is no question asking a sister's son to be on the stool. Thus preference is always given to brothers. But today things are changing very fast. At present the only criterion we look for is formal education to a high level.

So the non-literate royalists are being by-passed.

In the past we fought with the gun and matchets but, today, we are doing so with the pen.

Q. What are some of the qualifications to become a chief?

A. Wisdom, knowledge, peace-loving and patriotism, and a would-be good administrator, and the last a level-headed man.

Q. Does this also apply in selecting a candidate for a lesser stool?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have any state property

A. Yes. I will begin from the tip of the knot to unfasten it.

(a) State Umbrellas:-

The biggest state umbrella is the "Bamoo". The first is known as "Akoko baatan ne ne mma". There is another called "Nyankonton" with a symbol or insignia called "Oto akyiri a ofa". This indicates that the Dormaahene is all-powerful and omnipresent. Anything that falls down whether in front or behind he sees it and grabs it as his. The meaning of Nyankonton (rainbow) is that it is so conspicuous in the sky and is seen by all. Thus the Dormaahene is likened to it for he is so majestic and is seen and admired by all There is another umbrella called "Nyina ne mmene". This literally means the silk cotton tree and horns. This proverbially translated means whether one attains the giant height of the silk cotton tree or has outgrown horns like the buffalo is not feared by the Dormaa monarchy.

We have another called "Ako Bene" which indicates that if there is something worthwhile in waging wars I would have grown horns. There is another with the symbol of "Prekebe Gyanaadu". This is a seed with a very strong smell showing that when the king comes out all people feel his presence. This indicates his power and popularity in the state.

(b) Staffs of office:-

All the Akyeame Poma are gold-plaited. The first is "Adwetakyi anoma weremfoo" - he stands on a cannon(apremo) with a bottle of gunpowder in the mouth and rounds of ammunition at the back. This indicates Adwetakyi is always at sentry guarding the stool without fail. Secondly, there is one which has the symbol of a buffalo (ekoo) which means however thin this animal grows, when killed, would be able to supply sufficient meat for one "apakro" i.e. one plat-form on which hunters smoke their meat.

The third shows two people sitting on stools. One is seen eating while the other sits with the hands supporting the chin. This is interpreted to mean "Doo adee wo no na odie "i.e. the persons who owns a thing is entitled to its consumption. In other words the one who provides house-keeping money eats the meal and not the one feeling hungry. The biggest of the staffs is the one with an elephant. It stands on "dadefidie" - a trap - which is set and always buried in the ground. Because of its great weight the traps fails to catch it. This proverbially means that when the elephant steps in a trap it fails to work; it rather destroys the trap. This is similar to the status and position of the Dormaahene for there is no challenger to his authority. He is the Elephant who destroys all that comes his way.

Q. In whose reign did you acquire all these stool property?

A. Attakora Amanfampong and Yeboah Kodie.

But it is incumbent on all subsequent chiefs to replenish the stock.

Q. What are the oaths of your state?

A. The greatest oath is "Dormaa-Man"

Q. How did it come about?

A. It came as a result of the inevitable civil war at Akwamu which was averted by the migration of Atta Kumaa to this place. Thus the move made by him was his love for the state hence 'Do-Man' (patriotism). In the past if one swore it for no apparent reason he was summarily executed. On the other hand if one, swore for good reasons he provided 'aseda' (thanksgiving) of about £9 6/- (¢19.20).

Q. Where did the executions take place?.

A. At Wasambogho . This was a very big stone under a huge flourishing tree called Sraman Gyedua.

Q. Could you tell us the process of execution?

A. Before one is finally executed he is put under "paa" - this was our way of handcuffing a victim.

If your case were serious both hands were handcuffed i.e. your hands were placed in wooden case and nailed to the ground. You were then stripped naked. During meals one hand was released to enable you take your meals.

All serious cases were tried in the presence of the king. Non-serious ones were transferred to the lesser chiefs to settle. Thus the king sat on all cases that involved the spilling of human blood for he would not like to shed blood for nothing.

Trial By Ordeal:-

If any case cropped up between two persons without a witness this procedure took place:- There is a tree called 'Dom' at Domase[1]

1. Domase derived its name from this tree "Dom-ase" (meaning where the 'Dom' tree is.)

near Sunyani. The Dormaahene made one of his wives, Antepim, to stay there. He also asked one of the royalist, Kwasi Bosontwi, to stay there with the wife.

Some parts of the tree were collected and pounded. This was always done by a servant who had not slept with a woman. Two clean bowls were then provided into which the substance was poured. From these bowls the medicine was poured into two clean Calabashes and served to the two accused persons or victims. Each was served three times. If the substance was vomitted out one was declared innocent. If, on the other hand, the substance stayed in the stomach this indicated one's guilt. In such a case the victim was immediately marched to Bansambogho to face execution.

This was the way justice was administered to individuals in the state.

Q. Who kept the "nnaduafoo" in custody until their trial?

A. The Akyeremadehene or Adomankomahene did that.

It was his responsibility to brief the king of all cases pending and how to dispose of them.

There were two types of cases. The most serious ones went to the king's court. The lesser-ones went to the sub-chiefs. The cases on which the king sat always involved "nnade totoo" i.e. execution by the sword.

Q. What are the main festivals of your state?

A. The main festival is known as the Kwafie which is celebrated yearly. On that day the great stool is carried to the river side to be purified and it is also given food to eat. The Kwafie is otherwise known as Odwira. Thus we have two types of festivals:-

(a) Odwira (b) Ordinary

Q. Who qualifies to celebrate the Odwira festival?

A. The Odwira is celebrated by all Amanhene who have ever gone to war and got some heads of other prominent chiefs. The Dormaahene, for instance, has got four of these heads - Obiri Yeboah, Gyedu Baa, Nworobea and Abo Kofi. The ordinary festival is done by the wing chiefs to rally round their people.

Q. How is Odwira celebrated in your state?

A. On the eve of the Kwafie which is Thursday evening the Dormaahene appears at the doorway of the stool room. The four heads of the conquered chiefs are brought and placed before him. He then mounts on them. Prayers are said for these conquered chiefs to always submit themselves to the Dormaa stool as they had done in the past. They are then given food, which is in the form of "ntwoma" (red clay) to eat. That is, the yam that is offered to them to eat is put in 'ntwoma' first.

Q. When do the lesser chiefs celebrate their festivals?

A. It is on the Kwafie 'Nyiano' (ending) called Nunufie. They too take their stools to the river side to be purified or baptised.

Q. What is the significance of 'baptising' these stools?

A. In war it is the stools we fight to preserve. They are always carried to the war front. But one cannot win a war if the stool is defiled. That is why both the great and lesser stools are cleansed or baptised every year.

Q. In whose reign did you begin your Odwira celebrations?

A. Ohene Kusi Amoah (the first Akwamu chief). After him came the following:- (ii) Kwafo Akoto (iii) Ansa Sasraku (iv) Attakora Amahiampong

Thus we were at Akwamu when we started all these. Our first chief, after we had left Akwamu, was Attakora Amaniampong, He was followed by the following:- (ii) Yeboah Kodie - Hpobi Yaa Ba odi Akom (iii) Afari Kokoo - Ntumniri a oka Akyiri. (iv) Kyereneh Sikafoo - Wode Akoboo Gye no Taa Taa.

Q. What are your death and marriage rites and customs?

A. The death of a wing chief is the concern of the Paramount chief. You cannot celebrate the funeral without him. The death of an ordinary citizen is the concern of the 'abusua' (family). There is a category of the ordinary citizen whose death is immediately reported to the King's Court. They are the stool carriers, Akradwarefoo (soul cleansers), Hoprani, Tuntuni, Banemni etc. They all serve at the king's court. Death of a Young Man:- This is the responsibility of the family (lineage) and the father. If he lived as a responsible citizen the funeral is celebrated with grandeur. He is honoured in a way for others to emulate his good deeds when he was alive. Any irresponsible citizen's death received only three days funeral.[1] On the other hand if he is responsible and accepted by society his funeral will last for fifteen (15) days.

Mass Funerals: In the past when we went to war many of the subjects fell. The Elders, therefore, would appoint a special day to celebrate the funeral of these fallen gallant men.

1: An irresponsible citizen is the one who does no good things in life, does not respect elders and does not head to good advice.

It is because of the stool that they lost their lives and they ought to be honoured as such. The king would sit in state with the sub-chiefs to mourn them for fifteen (15) days. He would donate, say, one hundred predwan[1] for the families of the dead.

Q. Why was done in your state?

A. It was done to encourage the subjects to fight future wars without complaints; otherwise they would decline doing so.

The Death of a Member of the Chiefly Class

The king's death is announced after "Da du nna num" (15) days. His death is always kept secret. It is the responsibility of the Kyeremohene (Chiraahene) to tell the whereabouts of the king. Thus he breaks the news of his death to the nation. When he is coming to tell the Oman he brings the "adasuo" along with him. At dawn the announcement is made. This is the customary and traditional way of announcing the death of the ruler to the public. Without Chiraahene no other person could break the news. In the past the penalty of doing so was death. When the news is broken to the people they mourn and fast for fifteen continuous days. All the Elders on stools come to swear the oath of allegiance to their fallen leaders.

1: One Predwan is £9 6/-

B R E A K

Resumption of Interview

Q. What do the Elders bring along when they are coming to swear to their dead ruler?

A. In the past they brought "Nhema Nna" - dawn sleep. Having sworn to the dead body you placed your 'Nhema Nna' by it.

Q. What was this Nhema Nna?

A. That was an "akyere", that is, a person fit for sacrificial purposes. Such people were sacrificed to go along with the king to carry his load in the next world. All of us could not accompany the king and so the wing chiefs had to bring along an "akyere" each to do so. After swearing each chief would say "Nana wo Nhema Nna ni" - Nana this is your 'nhema nna', for you slept and did not get up again.

Q. Have you any drum music, songs, incantations, Kwadwom etc. in which the history of your state is narrated?

A. Yes. The first is the atumpan sono and it is not beaten without a cause. Those chiefs of the calibre of Dormaahene have this type of drum. The vellum is of no ordinary animal besides the elephant.

Origins of the Atumpan Drum:- The first man to bring about atumpan drumming is called Konkon Kyenkyen. One can see this drummer whenever the moon is on. He always drums on the moon. That is why all drummers mention his name first on the drums:-

(1) Konkon Konkon Kyenkyen Kyenkyen
Otweneboa Kodua Okodua Tweneduo
Odomankoma Kyerema
Mama mehomene so
Mama me homene so

(2) Krontire ne Akwamu no ante
Odomankoma boo hene, boo sene, boo Kyerema
Oboo Akwamu Akyerako Braku te tire Brako Okonini

(3) Akyempem oku asene
Akyereko tenten Akyereko Kwadwane
Yo twa Nwabem woaduru Hwin

(4) Otwe ho dua betebete
Otwe ho dua dendendenden
Oman tiri ne ogyafo
Oman tiri ne ogyafo kronkron.

Translation:-

(1) Konkon Konkon Kyenkyen Kyenkyen
Tweneboa Kodua be exalted
The drummer of all time
Your are exalted, you are exalted

(2) The two great wings of Krontire and Akwamu Haven't you been stirred
Odomankoma created the chief, the court crier, and the drummer;
He created Akwamu Akyereko Brako
The Remover of heads the great warrior.

(3) Akyempem, Killer of court criers
Akyereko the giant, the Monster
If Nwabem is crossed you come to Hwin

(4) The drum wood is soft, soft
The drum wood is hard, hard
The nucleus of the nation is ogyafo
The head of the nation is holy ogyafo.

Q. What is ogyafo?

A. This is an ancient customary rite performed on all girls before they could marry to produce children. Without its performance no woman is allowed to sleep with a man. In the past it was a great taboo to violate this. So without the ogyafo ritual there would be no procreation to replenish the population. That why it is said that ogyafo is the head and tail of a nation in the same vein this is analogous to the kotokro

sticks used in beating the atumpan drums. Without them the drum would not be sounded to perpetuate the customs and the way of past deeds which constitute their culture and history.

The king's Praise Songs (Apaee)

After above recitals on the drum we come to the 'apaee'

(1) Ohene Agyeman Badu ee!!
Okum nnipa
Wo ye okofo da da
Obanim twereboo a wo ho bone atuduro

(2) Okwaebibirem hene
Abono Kyempem Duodualkwahene
Tweneboa Kodua see
Oma no damirifua
Wo ye katakyi a omo aforoga orebe ko

Translation

(1) Ohene Agyeman Badu ee!!
You kill people
Your 're great warrior from time unknown
The great warrior who smells gunpowder

(2) King of the black dense forest
Abono Kyempem Duodukwa king
Tweneboa Kofua condoles you
You the great one who wears "aforoo"
Ready to fight.

Q. What is "aforoo"?

A. Any man ready for battle wears battle dress. The "aforoo" is the first dress worn.

Apaee Songs Recited on State Occasions.

(1) Ono no oo!!
Ono na ofiri nnade kyire aba Penamakro
Ofiri Penamakro aba Gyasewa
Ofiri Agyasewa aba Penamakane
Ofiri Apenamakane agyina Abatwenu so.
Ahwe se ne nngyedua su ne suo ne suo
Baabi te aninnyane aninnyane.

(2) Ono no oo!! Dormaa Yeboah
Akwanfanu a ode no kwan Dormaahene
Ono na wapusu Asanteman
Ama Asanteman agu nkoko
Ono na aye saa aye saa ama ode
Nkrawiri ahye agyensu
Ono na aye saa aye saa ama ode
Prempeh asi nsoa.

(3) Ono no oo!! Ono no!!
Ona aye saa aye saa akum
Apebooso Yaw Nwonwaa
A ode ato Odwira mu
Ono na aku kwan ho wekyewekye
Ama kwan ho adwoo.

(4) Merete wo ho asem
Merete merete wo ho asem kosee
Te se nyinanta mmieensa so ahabane
Ono no oo!! Ono no!!
Ona apata atomfoo mmieensa
Nsa wo daban koro mu

(5) Ono no oo!! Ono no!!
Ona aye saa aye saa akum Obiri Yeboah
Anopa tutu ato Odwira mu
Osibire kete si Bantama Kurotia Obiri Yeboah
Dormaahene de no ato apaee mu

(6) Ono no oo!! Ono no !!
Dormaahene a oko Suntreso a oda nsaa so
Ono no oo!! Ono no!!
Barima katakyi a wafee fee
Ako mmontoo akofa kokoo abo kokoo so

At this juncture the king rises and the atumpan drums give damirifua.

TRANSLATION

(1) That's He! (the Hero) That's He!
He came from Nnadekyire to Penamakro
From Penamakro to Gyasewa
From Agyasewa to Penamakane
From Apenamakane stood on Abatwenu
To view his realm
In both its happy and sad state.

(2) That's He!! Yeboah, the Hero of Dormaa
The owner of the path
He had shaken Asante nation
And brought her to her knees

He had done the singular deed
To submerge Nkrawiri in water
He had done the singular deed
To make Prempeh a water trap.

(3) That's He!! That's He!!
He had done the singular deed, to kill
Yaw Nwonwaa of Apeboqso
Now in Odwira recitals
He had done the singular deed
To make the road safe for all passers.

(4) Hearing your deeds
Hearing your great deeds
Borne aloft like a giant tree
Seen and heard by all
That's He!! That's !!
He had done the singular deed
To separate three blacksmiths
Vying for the same rod

(5) That's He!! That's He !!
He had performed the feat of executing
Obiri Yeboah at dawn
Obiri Yeboah of Sibire kete si Bantama
Kurotia fame
Now a praise song recital

(6) That's He!! That's He!!
The Dormaahene who goes to Suntreso on Nsaa
That's He!! That's He!!
The Hero who has incessantly searched all nooks and corners.
To pile up gold nugget upon gold nugget.

Q. Could you tell us the wing chiefs in your state?

A. The great Asafohene (Apakanfo) are ten including the Gyasehene. They are the chiefs who have substantial number of guns under them. They in turn have their deputy Asafohene. What they do in the state is to fight to save the Dormaa Stool. The Dormaahene's finger nails with which he scratches are the ten Apakanfo. Thus they are his great warriors and Watch dogs of the State. They come together, deliberate and take decisions affecting the welfare of the state. For instance, they could in the past take war decisions. The development and general improvement rest with them. Their prime duty is to maintain

peace and security throughout the realm. They also to keep all stool property intact. They also see to replenish the stock. Finally it is their bounden duty to see to it that none of the stool property gets missing.

Warfare:

Q. Did your state have any standing army?

A. In the past we had soldiers but were not the same as we have today. In case of war all able-bodied men were mobilised to fight. If a chief was noisy, voiceferous, and boastful Nana would just despatch about six Apakanfo[1] to bring him down. These were his soldiers.

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[1] These were important wing chiefs who had command of soldiers in the kingdom.

KULAMO ("KULANGO") ORAL TRADITIONS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

- GHANA & IVORY COAST

DORMAA ORAL TRADITIONS II (ABOABO No. 3)

Respondent:

Name: Nana Kwame Gyamfi

Status: Chief of Aboabo No. 3 and the Aduanahene of Dormaa Traditional Area.

Date of Interview: 7th June, 1975.

In attendance were some Elders and the Queen - Nana Akosua Pomaa.

Q. Where did you come from to settle in this area

A. We came from Akwamu. No one gave birth to the Aduana clan. Instead we were dropped down from the heavens. God gave us a bible which is among our cherished state property.

Q. Why did you leave your former place

A. Our great grandfathers who were twins - Atta Panyin and Atta Kumaa (I cannot mention their names as it is daylight) had succession dispute. The cause of the trouble was that the then reigning king on the verge of his death told the Krontihene that after he had gone the stool should be given to Atta Panyin. He also went to tell the Gyasehene that the same stool should be given to Atta Kumaa. Thus after his death the two factions were claiming the same stool. This brought chaos and unrest in the state. To avoid an imminent civil strife Atta Kumaa (dynasty of Dormaa royalist lineage) left their ancestral home, Akwamu, entirely.

Q. Is any meaning attached to the word Dormaa

A. Yes. Dormaa is derived from the words "Do-Mane' which could be translated to mean patriotism. Those who loved their state and left it to avoid bloodshed.

Q. How did you leave and who was your leader

A. He was Adontenhene otherwise known as Mirekuhene. The Queen was left behind. We came to instal ours.

Q. Why do you have four separate Aboabo villages, viz: Aboabo No 1, Aboabo No 2, Aboabo No 3, and Aboabo No 4

A. In the past this place was quite a thick forest and gold was mined. The various groups that came to mine the mineral built separate settlements. The one who built Aboabo No 3 was one Yaw Addo. This pattern of settlement could be likened to or present system where farmers settle individually or in groups to do cocoa farming.

Q. Are all the four Aboabos under Dormaahene

A. Yes.

Q. How came the name Aboabo

A. In the past our ancestors performed some rituals wherever they settled. What they did was to take a pebble from the river they settled near. This pebble was "carried" as dead bodies were carried in the past, to ask the sort of name they should give to the settlement. Then it would mention its name that I am this or that. In the case of our four settlements the pebbles that were "carried" mentioned the name Aboabo hence all the four villages are called by

this name.

All the four villages have four independent chiefs who are all under the suzerainty of Dormaahene.

(i) Aboabo No 1 - Is directly under the Adontenhene

(ii) Aboabo No 2 - Is under the same Adontenhene

(iii) Aboabo No 3 - I am a brother of Dormaahene and also Aduanahene.

(iv) Aboabo No 4

Q. Why is this place known as Aduana

Secondly, why is Aduana clan given the credit of bringing about the existence of fire

A. Odomankoma, the Creator, created all things without fire. And as a result people ate raw food. When we were dropped from the heavens a dog was with us. We prayed to God (for at that time we were not serving deities (abosom) to change our mode of eating raw food. God listened to our prayer and fire was given to the dog who brought it to us. This great service, by our companion, was paid for by the act that the clan of Aduana do not eat a dog. It is a great taboo to do so.

Q. Nana, you mentioned the word 'Bible'. Does this suggest that you were Christians

A. Yes. We were true Christians. You see, our ancestors worshipped God this way. They cut a tree called 'Senuro with four forks. This was erected in the middle of the compound - Nyamedua. We offered prayers to God through

When we could not read and write this was the way
orshipped God - Tweaduampong. You see we did not have
hes, juju and diviners. We knew only God in the
ns.

ou come straight away from Akwamu to stay at your
nt place

We stayed at various places. We first settled at
se. Then we came to stay at Nsawam. This was the place
e we stayed and received donations as a result of the
th of our chief whose succession brought a dispute.
ou may be aware of donation in Twi means "Nsaa or Nsowa"
e the name of Nsawam[1]. Our next settlement was at
bo in the Kwahu region. On arriving at this place the
Queen, Nana Anima said in Twi "Ebuee! Mabra" which has been
corrupted to "Ebo or Bo or Obo". The Twi sentence means
"Oh, I am tired".

e was Yaw Addo, the first settler at Aboabo No 3
He was our own son. He came to search for gold. When
our chief Nana Kwasi Gyabaa arrived Addo handed over the
reigns of administration to him. I am his successor hence
I am ruling this place as Aduanahene.

What language did you speak when you came
Kwapim Twi. We were not speaking the language we speak
- Bono.

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n is a town 22 miles away from Accra.

Q. Whom did you meet here on your arrival

A. Nobody. It was an empty virgin forest

Q. Could you tell us the relations between Gyaman and your state

A. The Gyaman king is our real brother. Our migrations from Akwamu took us all the way to Gyaman land where we stayed at Asuefiri. Our chief was Nana Yeboah Kodie at that time. As a result of our frequent conflicts with the Asantes we moved again. It was harvest period so some decided to harvest their crops before joining the advance group. But they stayed and did not come. They are the present Gyaman people in the Ivory Coast. The above mentioned chief was buried at Abankesiem at Asuefiri.

Q. What was the occupation of your people

A. We were mining gold. The method of obtaining gold was through digging. We collected the ore from the river beds which we washed to obtain gold. The adults walked all the way to Dwaa - Cape Coast - to sell their wares. They used the money they realized to/Sarem (North or Savanna country) /to go to buy slaves. This was the work we did.

Q. Is there any meaning attached to Gyaman

A. Gyaman is a Bono language. If we did not migrate to this area from Asuefiri we would be speaking Gyaman language by now (ie. Kulange).

Q. What writing was your bible. Is it still in existence

A. (Could not be answered meaningfully).

Nana said the bible was just symbolic which was later on replaced by the new Bible.

Q. When the followers of Atta Kumaa left Akwamu where did the others go to

A. The followers of Atta Panyin stayed at Akwamu. The present Akwamuhene Nana Kwafo Akoto, is the occupant of Atta Panyin Stool.

Q. Could you give us the list of your chiefs up-to-date

A. I could only give you those of Aboabo No 3 ie. Aduana Stool.

(i) Weapea Akofo
(ii) Banini
(iii) Ameyaw Kwabena
(iv) Oppong ne Oppong (Pɔn ne Pɔn)
(v) Kyeremeh Yaw
(vi) Tweneboah Kodua
(vii) Adutwum Tini
(viii) Ayi Kofi Kwao
(ix) Kwasi Gyabaa
(x) Yeboah Kofie
(xi) Yeboah Kumaa
(xii) Adu Gyamfi
(xiii) Kwabena Kyeremeh
(xiv) Kwame Gyamfi (present chief, 1975).

I got my stool name from the twelfth chief.

Q. Could you also give us the list of the Queens

(i) Amma Kodua
(ii) Doma
(iii) Adwoa Nkrumah

(iv) Tabuaah

(v) Adwoa Nima

(vi) Akosua Pomaa (present Queen)

NB: Nana Asi Lomaa was the Queen who brought us from Akwamu.

DORMAA ORAL TRADITIONS III (AMMASU)

Respondent:

Name: Nana Kwame Appiah

Status: Chief of Ammasu and Ankobeahene of Dormaa Traditional area.

Education: One of the pioneers of Dormaa Secondary School which was established in 1947.

In attendance were about four Elders whose names were not taken.

Q. Where did you come from to settle in this area

A. Akwamu, the present site of Akosombo Dam.

Q. Who was your leader when you were coming

A. Ansa Sasraku.

Q. Where did you go to on leaving Akwamu

A. We came to settle at Nsawam. We stayed here for a long time. You could see that "Wam" forms the second syllable of Nsawam. From Nsawam we came to Obo. Our next settlement was at Asumengya (Essumeja) in Asante. From here we migrated to Suntreso near Bantama. In the past from Suntreso up to the Komoe River was inhabited by the Dormaa people. We stayed at Suntreso for a long time - over 40 years. We fought many wars too.

Q. What language did you speak when you came

A. It was a mixture of Akwamu and Akwapim. You could see that the Dormaa language is a mixture of Fante and Akwapim.

Q. What is the relationship between you and the Gyaman

A. We are Dormaa people and not Gyaman (One of the Elders answered)

Nana Himself:- It is true we went to stay with the Gyaman but we did not originate from that place. From Suntreso we came to Bomaa and thence to Abesim. From here we went to the Ivory Coast. The stay here was incompatible with our way of life. The staple food was yam (fufu) which we detested. So we made our way back to Dormaa, our present habitat.

Q. I have been told from reliable source that the Dormaahene is the nephew of the king of Gyaman. How far is this true.

A. This is partly true. But if we critically analyse the whole situation then it is not true. Firstly, the Dormaa people came from Akwamu. When we came to the Ivory Coast we met the Gyaman king who was a very old person. Thus we gave him the respect/that is why he claims this status over us.

Q. What role does the Ankobeahene play in the Dormaa Traditional Area. Secondly, why is it that when any royalist dies you paint your faces black and slaughter some animals and, in the past, human beings

A. It is true that in the past human beings were killed for ritual purposes. If any of the royals died and the public were not told and any individual disclosed it unofficially that person with the whole family was executed. The public were always told of such a death by the Chiraahene, Benkumhene of Dormaa Traditional Area. It is one of the brothers of Dormaahene who makes the announcement hence the Benkumhene, does so.

The other brothers of the king are Aduanahene, Akwamuhene and Ankobeahene. In the past if there were to be any war the Ankobea clan did not go because we are royalist of the Dormaa Stool. But our sons did go. The Elders stayed at home. What we did, when everything had died down with no more shooting at the war front, was to go to collect war booty - "Yɛnkɔ bea nso yɛdi bea adeɛ". That is why we are called Ankobea. The question as to why we blacken our faces is just to differentiate ourselves from other groups. Some use 'ntwoma' red clay to paint their faces. When any of the brothers (mentioned above) dies and the Ankobeahene does not go there to see and acknowledge this be true, no one is allowed to weep.

GYABUNU RITES:- In the past we performed a ritual called Gyabunu which involved human sacrifice. We usually grouped at one end of the town. We then sent messengers to tell the Elders that the Ankobea had come and therefore "something" should be brought. That something was a human being. What we did was to drive a dagger through one cheek piercing through the tongue to the other cheek. The victim was then bent over the Gyabunu so that the blood dripped slowly on it. After this ritual we went straight to see where our dead brother had been laid. On seeing the dead body a gun was immediately fired. We then wept and others did the same. From this place the young men went on rampage throughout

the town slaughtering any domestic animal that came their way. We cooked and ate the meat freely. This is a custom we have carried all the way along from Akwamu and it is still operating but in a modified form; for we do not sacrifice human beings now. Instead animals are used.

NB: We paint our faces to disguise our identities and to differentiate us from other groups. If we meet anyone with 'ntwoma' - face he is liable for molestation.

Q. Why did you move from Buntreso and secondly, what is the meaning of Ammasu.

A. We left as a result of wars with Asante. Ammasu is derived from our ancestor called Ammasu Yeboah. He grew very rich and bought many slaves to flourish the state.

Q. What was the need of human sacrifices

A. (An Elder) In the past if Dormaahene passed away we could kill as many as - one hundred people. The white man came to stop this. We did so because the state was ours. We were answerable to whatever we did. (Nana Himself): In the past, though there was civilization it was not up to the level we have today with formal education for our children. This does not conclude that our ancestors were not wise, they were wiser than some of us.

Look at the vast lands which belong to the Dormaa Traditional Area which is almost half of the whole Brong region. Let us fancy if such a ruler "goes to back to his village" (dies), what do you expect to happen.

So in the past people were executed on the death of a paramount chief to show his status in life. The higher status indicated the number of people sacrificed. If the 'Mighty Tree' had fallen smaller trees too followed.

Q. What are the meanings of Aduana and Nsuase

A. Those groups that came from Akwamu, namely; Dormaahene, Aduanahene, Akwamuhene, Ankobeahene and Benkumhene, - are known as Aduana. The other chiefs were created by us. You know if your son serves you well you have to compensate or appease him.

Nsuasehene was created by us which means he did not come with us from Akwamu. It was through marriage that Nsuase was institutionalized.

Q. Were yourancestors Christians, Mohammedans, or ancestral worshippers

A. We brought our own religion from Akwamu which was Christianity. Later we became worshippers of our ancestors and deities.

Q. How did modern Christianity come to your area

A. One Rev. Boadi brought the Presbyterian Church here. He came from Asiakwa in the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area. According to some elders the church was brought in about 1895 and a formal school was established in C1916.

Q. Do you attach any meaning to Bomaa

A. This town is part of Dormaa Traditional Area. It is near Teppa. It was the place where we fought many of our wars hence the name Bomaa. In Twi one would say, "Wo boo mma,"

they fought with sticks. The present chief of Bomaa is a son of Dormaahene or Dormaa Stool.

Q. Could you tell us the relations between Aduana and Wamfie

A. The Wamfiehene is the Akontihene of Dormaa Traditional Area. Strictly speaking, they are not /part of Aduana clan. According to our history they came from Denkyira. But the Wamfiehene is the son of Dormaahene like that of Bomaa. We are all incorporated into one and united Dormaa state which is indivisible.

Q. Why is Abesim part of Dormaa

A. From Bomaa we came to settle at Abesim. Abesim later on came to be known as "Kontraageso" - a corrupted name of "contract". Sunyani, Domase and all the other surrounding villages were under Dormaa tutelage. It was from Abesim that we left for Gyaman. We settled at a place called Nkumsa. Abesim, Bomaa and Chiraa are part of Dormaa state. Whenever we moved some were left behind. (An Elder) The word 'contract' (Kontraage) came about when a lorry road was being constructed through Tanoso to Sunyani. A portion allocated to a group of people to construct was known as Kontraage hence Abesim was given this name for some time. The real name is Abesim and it is still so.

DORMAA ORAL TRADITIONS IV (WAMFIE)

Respondent:

Name: Nana Kwasi Ansu Gyeabour

Status: Krontihene of Dormaa Traditional Area

Age: 104 years (Born 1871)

Date: 7th June, 1975.

Others in Attendance

(i) Okyeame Kwabena Agyei

(ii) Nana Kwaku Yeboah - Wamfie Akwamuhene

(iii) Mr. E.K. Mensah - Secretary to Nana Ansu Gyeabour.

Q. What other names does your town (Wamfie) bear

A. It is also known as Mansin. This was the name we brought from Denkyira.

Q. Does it have any meaning

A. Yes. It is derived from the sentence "Ma me nsene" which means make way and let me pass.

Q. From where did you come to settle here

A. We were royalists of the Denkyira stool. When the stool was vacant we fought for it but our group was denied the opportunity hence we left Jukwa and made our way here.

Q. How came that you are now one with the Dormaa

A. We were wandering about until we met the Akwamu (Dormaa) people at Asuongya - the present Essumeja in Asante. Before coming together with the Akwamu (Dormaa) we had then settled in this area for one and half years. We were told the Asantehene was then at Kokofu. We went to greet him there and came back to Asuongya.

One day we saw Mirekuhene from ..,(Kukoro) who came to greet us. He told us that they too came from Akwamu as a result of stool troubles. That when Ansa Sasraku died they fought for the stool but they were denied it. To avoid a split in the state their group left. When the Akwamu faction left they came to settle at Koforidua Kentenkrenso where they rested for some time; hoping for a peaceful settlement. But nothing good came out of it and so they moved farther. The Mirekuhene told us further that the Akwamuhene was just at the outskirts of Asuongya and that he (Mirekuhene) was sent as a scout to sort out things first. He was asked to go and bring the Akwamuhene and his entourage. Nana Gyamfi went for them. They were accorded nice treatment.

Q. Who was this Nana Gyamfi

A. He was the chief of the Mireku people - a wing chief of Akwamuhene at that time. He was the Akwamu Krontihene.

Q. How did your union with Akwamu come about

A. Both Akwamu and Jukwa breakaway groups came to realize that they had the same plight - they left their original homes as a result of stool disputes. So we contemplated coming together to form a union so that if one was attacked the other would come to his aid. After its formation we decided to leave and consequently informed the Asantehene who agreed to our proposal. He told us we could settle on any fertile soil we liked. He added that if there was

any mishap we should not hesitate informing him. Thus our two groups left in exodus and came to settle in Kumasi area.

Q. Whom did you meet here when you came

A. Amakomhene and Tafohene.

We greeted these two chiefs. We were kindly received and they told us to make settlement anywhere we liked.

Q. Where did you settle

A. Suntreso.

Q. What happened after your settlement

A. We were summoned to meet the Asantehene at Kokofu occasionally if something happened or had gone wrong. In course of time, the Asantehene too came to settle in Kumasi.

Q. Did you stay peacefully with Asantehene

A. At first we had peaceful settlement. Something happened afterwards which resulted in war. Once we had fought with Asante we felt nothing could bring us together again, to stay as brothers, so we decided to move from this area.

Q. Where did you go to

A. Abanpredease.

Q. Where was this place

A. That is the present town called Bomaa near Teppa in Asante. It was also known as Dormaa Hwidiem. The Asante followed us here and we fought them. The result of it was to move farther.

Q. To where

A. Gyaman in the Ivory Coast.

Having settled here for quite a number of years we retraced our steps to a new settlement. But we did not like to come to an amicable settlement with Asante.

Kyeremaa Labo Affair

She was a royalist of Dormaa. When we left Suntreso she stayed behind. She was flirting with a certain man at Ankaase. She went there with her younger brother Nana Yeboah Asuama Kukudabi. Thus they were left behind after the Suntreso War. It was at this juncture that the great Okomfo Anokye was forming the union of Asante States. It was the wish of Asantehene to incorporate us into the union for Dormaa was posing a threat to Asante. But the Dormaahene had gone very far (to Gyaman) and it would be just difficult to bring him back. The only alternative was to get one of his royalists to perform some rituals to make him come back. Consequently, the Asantehene was informed of the presence of Kyeremaa Labo and her brother at Ankaase. The two were brought immediately to Asantehene. The rituals were then performed against Dormaahene for his possible return. Kukudabi was made to play the role of "Kra" (soul) to the Asantehene. On ceremonial occasions he was decorated and gold chains were hung around his neck. According to the ritual the Dormaahene would inevitably come to join the Asante union.

At this juncture the Asantehene had heard there was plenty of gold in Brahure land so he decided to send messengers for it.

Q. Was the above mentioned royalist the same as Kyeremeh Sikafoo

A. Definitely so. he was the one.

Expedition to Brahureland

The Asantehene sent an expedition to Brahure land to see its ruler, Abena Poku, for gold. Before their arrival the son of Abena Poku (described as "Fire") had then left with half of the army for Kong. On hearing of the Asante invasion he quickly marched back. Abena Poku, Queen of Brahure, told the Asante expeditionary force to leave immediately before the son arrived.

Q. Where is Brahure

A. It is on Gyaman land beyond the Komoe River. The Queen was Aberewa Poku. The queen told the Asantes they were covetous and cupid of her gold and possessions. That she knew this before they started their adventure. That she was at the meeting which hatched the plot to dispossess her of her riches. She concluded, "The lady at Asantehene's court was me". That she was prepared to spare some of the gold to him.

Q. Who led the Asante expeditionary force to Brahure

A. Nana Kukudabi. On his way back he passed through Asikasso (Sikasso) where the people known as 'Ntenefoo' were.

Q. Was anything given to Asantehene as requested

A. Aberewa Poku knew Asantehene's lust for money and consequently

gave a big calabash full of gold dust. In addition was a big nugget of gold on which she used to sit. All these were to be given to Asantehene. This was done to avoid any future conflict with the Asante. Nana Poku ordered the Asantes to leave for if the son came to meet them he would destroy all. The sooner they left the sooner the son appeared. He enquired to know of what had gone wrong in the state. But the mother replied nothing had gone amiss. The son persuaded the mother to tell the truth and she disclosed the Asante episode. The son pursued the Asante force to the River Komoe. They had then crossed it. The Asantes doubled their steps and came to spend the night at Ntene. On their way Nana Yeboah Asuama Kukudabi heard some unusual noise "paa paa" indicating the slapping of somebody. He stood still and listened. He could recognise the voice of a woman (slapping the son) as that of a Dormaa born. He entered the house and enquired of a woman who had slapped a child. The woman disclosed that she was in the company of Dormaahene. That they came to the area to find a job - "penpen" or 'bata'[1]. Kukudabi enquired from the woman whether she could direct him to Dormaahene's place to which she replied in the affirmative. The following day Kukudabi asked the rest of the group to go ahead to Kumasi and he would follow afterwards.

1: Migrant labour. In the past the name was 'penpen' but now it is 'bata'.

This was done to enable him see the Dormaahene. He gave the gold nugget and dust to them.

Q. Where did he go then

A. He made his way to Bondoukou. He found Dormaahene at Nsaam (Nsuaem). In course of time the Dormaa king died.

Q. Who was this king

A. Oheneba Dei Kusi Agyeman, son of the Dormaa Stool.

Q. Could you tell us how the son of the Dormaa Stool came to occupy it

A. In the course of our wanderings and wars the royalist group became depleted. The stool was given to this brave son to protect it until one of the royalist grew up. So when Kukudabi came he was put on it as the lost royalist who had come back. He afterwards became known as Kyeremeh Sikafoo. After his enstoolment he told the people that he was taking them back to Kumasi. The Elders refused this request. But Kyeremeh replied, "Me ntena tuo to matena tuo ano" which means that I would stay at the base or source of power and not otherwise.

Q. Why did the Elders refuse to go to Asante

A. Because there had already been a conflict between Asante and Dormaa which made the latter to go to Gyaman. For once they had fired on each other in war their relations had been marred and would not become cordial again - "Huruye tirim mpa mmogya;" there is always a tickling blood in the head of a wild fly.

So Nana Kyeremeh left without the majority of his Elders and came to settle at Abesim (near Sunyani)

Q. Who was your leader when you left Denkyira

A. Adiko Wam. His brother with whom he came was Nsaaso (Afraaso). Their sister was Abena Poku.

Q. Whom did you meet here when you came

A. We met Essumejahene, a wing chief of Asantehene. It was at this place that we met "Agya" that we came to form the Dormaa State.

Q. Who is Agya

A. I refer to Dormaahene. I am a son of the Dormaa Stool. So I always call the occupant of the stool 'Agya' - Father.

Q. What language did you speak on your arrival

A. Twi.

Q. Has there been any change in your language

A. Yes. There has been a little change.

Q. Why is this place called both Mansin and Wamfie

A. On leaving Denkyira (Jukwa) we came to Dwanmfuom. At this place the Denkyirahene sent a delegation to meet Adiko Wam and Nana Afraso to persuade us come back. Adiko Wam replied that if they were prepared to give up the stool to him he would then go. He traced the stool at his which belonged to his mother Ntreko Pokua. That he would not go back to see his junior on it. When they failed to come to terms with him he shouted, "Mo mma me dee me nsene" - make way and

let me pass. Hence "Me Nsene" became Mansin.

Q. I have learned that when you were at Abesim "Mo hyee atuduro" - literally you burnt gunpowder. What is the meaning of this

A. The people refused to go to settle at Kumasi and instead chose Abesim. The Asantehene still kept in touch with the Dormaahene. Whatever happened in Kumasi he was informed. In due course of time the stool came to 'Agya' Kwadwo Yeboah. The Asantehene complained that he had seen that the Dormaahene had, of late, not been co-operating and therefore unwilling to serve him. Consequently 'Agya' was summoned to appear before Asantehene. Agya felt he would not be in safe hands at Kumasi and felt reluctant to go. The Asantehene, there and then, declared him a rebel. Sensing imminent danger and torture in the hands of the Asante Agya took the only noble and honourable path of death - he blew himself with gunpowder; and this has since been known as "W'ahye atuduro".

Q. Is there any meaning attached to Abesim. When Nana Kyeremeh Sikafoo left Gyaman he came to Abesim. He felt could not make his way to Kumasi without Mansinhene so he said that "Metena awe bese atwene". Thus "awe bese" became Abesim. This is essence means I would stay chewing kola until Mansinhene arrived.

Q. Where was Mansinhene at this time

A. Gyaman (Nsonsommes).

In course of time the Mansinhene died and he was succeeded by Nana Laaku. It was this chief who brought us from Gyaman to join Kukudabi at Abesim. After our arrival Kukudabi died and Nana Kwadwo Yeboah became the Dormaa king. He took us to Kumasi where the difference between Dormaa and Asante were resolved. The two kings "drank fetish" (nom abosom) never to go to war against each other.

Q. What is the meaning of Gyaman.

A. The word Gyaman refers to the Dormaa people as well. It means those who deserted their nation (Oman) and went to the Bondouku region. Gyaman is derived from the Twi words "Gya - Oman".

Q. How far is it true that the Dormaa stool is the nephew of the Gyaman stool

A. This is quite true. They are the same 'abusua' - family.

Q. Could you give us the list of your chiefs

A. I shall only concern myself with Wamfie:-

(i) Antwi Kumah
(ii) Nana Laaku (pronounced Deeku)
(iii) Tutu Bafo
(iv) Kum Apakrohene
(v) Yaw Assamoah
(vi) Antwi Panyin
(vii) Yeboah Yaw
(viii) Twene Kwaku
(ix) Kwadwo Amponsah
(x) Adu Yaw
(xi) Kwabena Kuma Akyeaw

(xii) Kwaku Donkor
(xiii) Kwamu Agyei
(xiv) Kwasi Ansu Gyeabour (present chief).

Q. Did you come as one family (abusua) to this place

A. No. My group came from Denkyira while Agya's group came from Akwamu. We met at Asumeja and formed a union of the two states. The stool we brought from Denkyira is what I am occupying now and the one from Akwamu is what Agya (Dormaahene) is occupying too.

Q. Why was the need of your coming together to form a union

A. It was as a result of incessant wars and conflicts which made us form a union to enable us ward off all external threats and aggression. We drank fetish '(nom abosom) to seal the union hence we have become one people and one 'abusua' - family.

Q. What was the nature of your union

A. One of the important clauses of the union was that the Dormaahene was to be the king and I to be the Krontihene ie. second in command of the kingdom. We also agreed that the Dormaahene could not execute any offender from Mansin likewise Mansinhene could not do the same to any Akwamu (Dormaa) citizen. Such an offender ought to be punished by the respective authority and inform the other chief afterwards.

Illustration - For instance if the offence merited execution I would do it and send the jaw (abodwea) to Dormaahene.

This was to indicate to him that the offender had been punished. He too would do likwise if the offence against me came from his side.

Q. Is there any meaning attached to Wamfie (formerly Mansin)

A. My group did not join Agya (Dormaahene) to stay at Abesim. When we came from Gyaman later we realized that the whole area had then been occupied by Bomaa, Chiraa and others. We therefore retreated and came to occupy the forest here. We saw a river called Wam. We found the place was good. Our final settlment was made after Agya Kwadwo Yeboah had blown himself with gunpowder. The Mansin people stayed here for a long time.

Q. Whom did you meet when you arrived here

A. Nobody.

Q. What happened afterwards when you finally settled

A. Agya (Dormaahene) and his group came from Abesim to join us. I directed them to Pāām where they went to stay. The only big town, at that time, in this area was Wam. Anyone who visited Wam referred to it was Wam - Fie (ie. the home of Wam surrounding villages) hence Wamfie. Of all the Dormaa groups Ankobeahene was the first to arrive. He was called Akwaboa from Abesim.

Q. Who was the Mansinhene at that time

A. Nana Yaw Assamoah.

Q. Where did Ankobeahene settle

A. Immasu.

Q. What was the relationship between you and the Ankobeahene

A. Whenever anything occured he had to inform me and I, in turn, informed the Dormaahene at Abesim. After him came Akwamuhene at AKwamuhene called Kofi Badu. He stayed with Mansinhene at Wamfie and a section of them are still here. Kofi Badu later on moved to stay at Pampatia - its 'amanfooso'[1] is just down there. The third group to come was Akontanim whose chief was Bosompra Kwabena. The Mansinhene asked his emissary by name Batani Kwasi Badu showed them a place to settle. All these groups came to settle here mainly to find gold. Gold mining was the only occupation at that time. All these groups whenever they were coming to Wam would say, "I am going to Wamfie".

Q. What was your relationship with the Gyaman kingdom

A. Nananom migrated to Gyaman twice. After the gunpowder episode both the Dormaahene and Mansinhene left for Gyaman again. It was there that Nana Pong Yaw was installed as Dormaahene to replace Nana Kwadwo Yeboah. After a lapse of time the Mansinhene asked permission to come to settle in the forest area. He was allowed to settle at Nkumsa where we did some farming. Nkumsa is a little distance from Dormaa Ahenkro. The queen (Nana Oppon Yaw's Mother) by name Akosua Wusuwaa also came to make a settlement known as Baadee. So when the Mansinhene was at Nkumsa the queen was also at Baadee.

1: Old settlement virtually deserted.

In due course of time all the various Dormaa groups converged at Nkumsa. The Mansinhene later left for Pāām where the Dormaahene joined him. Thus we retraced our steps to our former places.

Q. Could you tell us why Dormaa and Asante had a conflict at Buntreso

A. It all began like this:- The Dormaahene bought a horse for his "adehyee" (a royalist) and when the Asantehene saw it he too bought one for his "adehyee". The two "adehyee" were very good friends and they always rode on their horses to meet at Bantama. They drank wine and played together. One day when they met the Asante adehyee was without his horse. He looked very sad and worried. The Dormaa adehyee said "Awe" (a term used by the two), why do you look sad and worried. He replied that nothing had gone so wrong and that only "My horse has died." The Dormaa adehyee sympathized with his friend and consoled him that the uncle would buy him another one. The Asante adehyee entreated his friend to allow him have a little ride but he declined. Suddenly the Asante adehyee drew out his dagger and stabbed the horse in the stomach and it fell down dead. The Dormaa adehyee became so furious and wild that in the struggle that ensued he put his friend down and cut off his head. Thus began the Dormaa - Asante hostilities.

The End.